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CLAIMS

Please amend the following claims:

1-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently amended) A coating material comprising a rheological additive according to claim 1 comprising illite clay, smectic clay and an attapulgite; wherein the components illite clay : smectic clay : attapulgite are present in the ratio of 1 to 100 : 1 to 100 : 1 to 100 by weight;

wherein the coating material comprises

0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the illite clay,

0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the smectic clay, and

0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the attapulgite; and

wherein the coating material further comprises a binder.

5. (cancelled)

6. (Currently amended) The coating material according to claim 5 comprising 0.1 to 3.0 wt.-% of the illite clay, 0.1 to 2.0 wt.-% of the smectic clay and 0.1 to 2.0 wt.-% of the attapulgite.

7. (Previously presented) The coating material according to claim 4, furthermore comprising a carrier liquid, wherein the carrier liquid comprises water as the main component.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously presented) The coating material according to claim 4, furthermore comprising a refractory material.

10. (Previously presented) The coating material according to claim 9, wherein the refractory material comprises pyrophyllite, mica and/or zirconium silicate.

11. (Previously presented) The coating material according to claim 4, furthermore comprising a binder.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously presented) The coating material according to claim 4, furthermore comprising a glass former and a network modifier.

14. (Previously presented) The coating according to claim 13, wherein the glass former comprises SiO₂ and Al₂O₃ and the network modifier is selected from Na₂O, K₂O, CaO, BaO, Li₂O, MgO, ZnO, PbO and SrO.

15 - 16. (Cancelled)

17. (Withdrawn – currently amended) A process for the production of a coating material according to claim 4, comprising the steps of

a) providing a rheological additive comprising illite clay, smectic clay and an attapulgite, wherein the components illite clay : smectic clay : attapulgite are present in the ratio of 1 to 100 : 1 to 100 : 1 to 100 by weight, and

b) introducing the rheological additive into a carrier liquid; wherein the coating material comprises

0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the illite clay,

0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the smectic clay, and

0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the attapulgite; and

wherein the coating material further comprises a binder.

18. (Withdrawn) A process for coating porous bodies with a coating material comprising the steps:

- a) providing a coating material according to claim 4;
- b) applying the coating material to a porous body; and
- c) drying the coated porous body.

19. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 18, wherein the porous body is a core or a mold for use in foundry technology.

20. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 18, wherein the porous body is a raw ceramic body.

21. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 18, wherein the porous body is cardboard or paper.

22. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 18, wherein the material is applied to the porous body by means of a dip coating process.

23. (Withdrawn) A coated porous body onto which the coating material according to claim 4 has been applied.

24-28. (Cancelled)

29. (Currently amended) A method of controlling the application characteristics of a coating material for porous bodies, comprising

- a) identifying coating material components to be applied to a porous body to impart an intended effect on the porous body;
- b) determining the desired rheological properties of a coating material comprising the coating material components of step a) required to achieve predetermined application characteristics of the coating material; and

c) mixing the a rheological additive of claim 1 comprising illite clay, smectic clay and an attapulgite; wherein the components illite clay : smectic clay : attapulgite are present in the ratio of 1 to 100 : 1 to 100 : 1 to 100 by weight; with the coating material components in an amount effective to achieve the desired rheological properties of the coating material as determined in step b), wherein the resulting coating material comprises

0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the illite clay,

0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the smectic clay,

0.1 to 10 wt.-% of the attapulgite, and

a binder.